

Exchange With Reporters Prior to a Meeting With Congressional Leaders
September 10, 1993

Israeli-Palestinian Declaration

Q. Mr. President, are you going to invite Arafat and Rabin to the ceremonies on Monday?

The President. The parties will decide, as they've made all the other decisions, who will come to the ceremony. Whatever their decision is is fine with me.

Q. Can you give us an idea of what the United States is prepared to do to help this agreement work?

The President. I'll be talking a little more about that later, and I'll have a statement as soon as this meeting is over. I want to talk to the Members here about it first.

Q. Well, can you give us an idea of what this meeting is all about?

The President. Well, we're going to brief them on—the Secretary of State and I are—about, obviously, our strong support for the agreement, what America's responsibilities will be, what our allies and friends around the world are interested in doing about it, and where we go from here.

NOTE: The exchange began at 9:18 a.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks on the Israeli-Palestinian Declaration and an Exchange With Reporters

September 10, 1993

The President. Ladies and gentleman, today marks a shining moment of hope for the people of the Middle East and, indeed, of the entire world. The Israelis and the Palestinians have now agreed upon a declaration of principles on interim self-government that opens the door to a comprehensive and lasting settlement.

This declaration represents an historic and honorable compromise between two peoples who have been locked in a bloody struggle for almost a century. Too many have suffered for too long. The agreement is a bold break-

through. The Palestinian Liberation Organization openly and unequivocally has renounced the use of violence and has pledged to live in peace with Israel. Israel, in turn, has announced its recognition of the PLO.

I want to express my congratulations and praise for the courage and the vision displayed by the Israeli and Palestinian leadership and for the crucially helpful role played by Norway.

For too long the history of the Middle East has been defined in terms of violence and bloodshed. Today marks the dawning of a new era. Now there is an opportunity to define the future of the Middle East in terms of reconciliation and coexistence and the opportunities that children growing up there will have whether they are Israeli or Palestinian.

I want to express the full support of the United States for this dramatic and promising step. For more than a quarter of a century our Nation has been directly engaged in efforts to resolve the Middle East conflict. We have done so because it reflects our finest values and our deepest interests, our interests in a stable Middle East where Israelis and Arabs can live together in harmony and develop the potential of their region, which is tremendous. From Camp David to Madrid to the signing ceremony that will take place at the White House on Monday, administration after administration has facilitated this difficult but essential quest. From my first day in office, Secretary Christopher and I have made this a priority. We are resolved to continue this process to achieve a comprehensive Arab-Israeli resolution.

In 1990, the United States suspended the U.S.-PLO dialog begun 2 years earlier following an act of terrorism committed against Israel by a faction of the PLO. Yesterday Yasser Arafat wrote to Prime Minister Rabin, committing the PLO to accept Israel's right to exist in peace and security, to renounce terrorism, to take responsibility for the actions of its constituent groups, to discipline those elements who violate these new commitments, and to nullify key elements of the Palestinian covenant that denied Israel's right to exist. These PLO commitments justify a resumption of our dialog. As a result